

# St. James' E-pistle

## February 5, 2016

### Pulpit Notes

Brothers and Sisters:

After a great Annual Meeting, and a wonderful coffee hour hosted by Troop 80 of the Boy Scouts (which we sponsor), and a visit by Spirit of Unity Members, we've had a pretty busy and joyful couple of weeks.

Then, of course, we have Shrove Tuesday coming up - as fun a time as we could ask with a pancake race, pancake decorating and, yes, pancakes for dinner. Of course, the fun depends on you, but I know you'll join in.

Hold onto that fun and joy as we then move into the more sober, penitential season of Lent. Sure, we eat together each Sunday between services, but even that is a discipline. We eat together to remind ourselves that we are all one body, that no one group is independent from another, that we who so often want to go our own way, are called by God to come back together.

We begin each Lenten season with Ash Wednesday, a day when we observe a most peculiar tradition of placing ashes on our heads and saying the immortal words: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

There is no doubt about it. We shall all return to dust.

This is a reminder not only to fully live while we are here, to love while we can, but that we don't really belong here. We're on earth maybe 80, 90, 100 years (okay, maybe 110 for some), which in the grand scheme of things is the blink of an eye. Yet, we celebrate because we know that life beyond this mortal flesh is eternal and joyful.

It is largely the fear of death and loss of control that so often drives us away from God, away from loving our neighbor as ourselves. And, ironically, away from true life. So in this season, we turn away from those things that keep us from life and we turn toward Jesus.

That's one reason we are offering the 4-part series, "Remember That You Are Dust." It is a way of facing the fears and concerns we have about death in this life, of addressing the worries that plague too many of us, so that we can let go of those anxieties and embrace life more fully.

The series addresses spiritual, legal, logistical and practical issues surrounding death. Please see the attached flier for more information.

Meanwhile, I pray for you all a holy Lent.

Grace and Peace,

Chuck+

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### The News of the Church

**Lenten Meditation Booklets:** We hope to have the Lenten Meditation Booklets available at the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper. Get yours next week!

## Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

February 9, 2016  
6:00 PM



St. James' Parish Hall

All are Welcome

**Kids! Join in on Fr. Chuck's Pancake Decorating Extravaganza!**

**FREE To All - No Admission Fee!**

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### **Ash Wednesday Services:**

Ash Wednesday starts the holy season of Lent with the Imposition of Ashes, a reminder that we are all mortal. Imposition of Ashes will be offered at **6:30 AM, 10:00 AM, and 7:00 PM**. Please make every effort to start your Lent well with this simply but powerful sign.

**Lenten Breakfast Sign-Up:** If you would like to be part of that fun and jolly crowd of cooks and cleaners for the Lenten Breakfasts, there is a sign-up sheet in the narthex. Just put your name down for a date, and show up!

**PLEASE PLEDGE!** You received a pledge card back in November, and we thank you if you have filled out and returned your card already. However, many have not yet done so, and we need you! Whether you pledge a lot or a little, it is of vital importance that every household pledge. I would desperately love to see 100% of the parish pledging. Kids can pledge with a special children's pledge card - no amount is too small. The main thing is that each of us steps up and says, "I Want to Be Part of God's Life Here!"

**Youth Group to Special Olympics:** The Youth of St. James' will be volunteers on February 20 for the Special Olympics. Please cheer for them as they cheer on some very special athletes. If you have not signed up to be part of it but would like to, please contact Fr. Chuck as soon as possible.

### **Boy Scout Breakfast:**

A hearty fresh cooked breakfast!

Your choice of:

Pancakes (Regular, chocolate chip or blueberry) Scrambled Eggs ~ Sausage or Bacon  
Hash browns ~ Orange juice  
Coffee or Tea

Where: St. James' Church  
4526 Albany Post Road, Hyde Park  
When: Saturday, February 13, 2016  
Time: 8:00 am - 11:00 am  
Cost \$8:00 per adult ticket  
\$6:00 per child ticket

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## "Remember That You Are Dust"

Preparing for Death  
In order to Live more fully...



Wednesdays at 7:00 PM  
St. James' Chapel  
10 East Market Street

### **February 24: The Spirituality of Dying**

The Rev. Chuck Kramer, Rector of St. James'

### **March 2: Wills and Legal Matters of Dying**

Mr. Michel Haggerty, Lawyer specializing in wills and elder law

### **March 9: Working with The Funeral Home**

Mr. Rob Sweet, Funeral Directory, Sweet's Funeral Home

### **March 16: Planning Your Funeral Service**

The Rev. Chuck Kramer, Rector of St. James'

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### **The News of the Diocese**

**Diocesan Cycle of Prayer:** Please pray for these diocesan ministries this week. If you want to check out the entire year's calendar for intercession, it's simple to find - go to <http://www.diocesenyny.org> and click under "Beliefs and Practices."

- 7 The Church of St. Ignatius of Antioch
- 8 St. Mary's Church, Castleton, Staten Island
- 9 Diocesan Global Mission Commission
- 10 Ash Wednesday: Episcopal Charities
- 11 St. Thomas' Church, Mamaroneck
- 12 St. Peter's Church, Port Chester
- 13 Diocesan Anti-Racism Committee

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### **Praying For Peace Everywhere:**

Let us continue to light a candle for peace in the Holy Land - and everywhere. Prayer is our most potent antidote to hatred.

#### **1. Candle for Peace**

Please also light a candle on Fridays - holy to both faiths - for Peace

Let us Light Candles for Peace

Two mothers, one plea:

Now, more than ever, during these days of so much crying,

on the day that is sacred to both our religions, Friday, Sabbath Eve

Let us light a candle in every home - for peace:

A candle to illuminate our future, face to face,

A candle across borders, beyond fear.

From our family homes and houses of worship

Let us light each other up,

Let these candles be a lighthouse to our spirit

Until we all arrive at the sanctuary of peace.

#### **2. The Mothers Prayer:**

God of Life:

You who heals the broken hearted, binding up our wounds.

Please hear this prayer of mothers.

You did not create us to kill each other

Nor to live in fear or rage or hatred in your world. You created us so that we allow each other to sustain Your Name in this world:

Your name is Life, your name is Peace.

For these I weep, my eye sheds water:

For our children crying in the night,

For parents holding infants, despair and darkness in their hearts.

For a gate that is closing – who will rise to open it before the day is gone?

With my tears and with my constant prayers, With the tears of all women deeply pained at these harsh times

I raise my hands to you in supplication: Please God have mercy on us.

Hear our voice that we not despair That we will witness life with each other, That we have mercy one for another, That we share sorrow one with the other, That we hope, together, one for another.

Inscribe our lives in the book of Life

For Your sake, our God of Life Let us choose Life.

For You are Peace, Your world is Peace and all that is Yours is Peace,

May this be your will

And let us say Amen.

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*Sheikha Ibtisam Mahameed and Rabba Tamar Elad-Appelbaum*  
*English Translation Amichai Lau-Lavie*

**Please keep the following people in your prayers:**

Ruth Blanding, John Bohlmann, Susie Buhalis, Mariel Carter, Joann Clark, Michael Day, Dottie Drake, Ross Eames, Jr., Linkin Ewalt, Steven Foote, Heather Francese, Jack Gordy, Robert Guariglia, Harold Hall, Dalton K., Edie Kline, Barbara Knakal, Ashley Konyn, Rosemary Leuken, Joanne Lynn, Doris Mack, Gordon Mackenzie, Virginia Mackenzie, Andrew Mendelson, Rev. Tim Millard, Charles Pardee (husband of Sally), Clifford Plass, Gerald Plass, Grace Plass, Linda Plass, Deborah Porach, John Robinson, John Ross, Richard Secor, James Sheeky, Naomi Sleight, Marguerite Spratt, Janice Syedullah, Tracy, Candace Vincent, Cassidy Way, Cliff Wells and Shawn Wheeler.

### **Schedules**

*A Note about Schedules: The names you see below are those listed on their respective schedules. There are often times when, due to sickness or travel, substitutes are asked to fill in or trade positions. This will probably NOT be reflected in the lists below—so, if there is an inconsistency between what you see here and what you see on Sunday, that is alright.*

Birthdays (this past week):	David Wardell, Jr.; Andrew Gausepohl
Birthdays (next week):	Cathi Tegtmeier; Doris Mack; Paul O'Halloran; William Fenwick; Deborah Belding
Acolytes:	February 7: Russell, John Beyer and Anna February 14: Bryanna, Amelia and Braeden
Altar Guild:	February 7: Team Number III February 14: Team Number I
8 a.m. Readers:	February 7: Debbie Belding and Jim Smyth February 14: Angela Henry and Lucille Ogden
10 a.m. Readers:	February 7: Donna Beyer and Deirdre Mae Micker February 14: Wilma Tully and Andy Hall
Ushers:	February 7: Donna and John Beyer

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Pledge Clerks:	February 14: Dean Caswell and Austin Horne February 7: Joanne Lown and Dean Caswell
Parish Cycle of Prayer:	February 14: Doug Belding and Anna Marie Pitcher February 7: Jada and Hope Jennings; Pat Keeffe; Jack and Suzann and Brian and Faith, February 14: Morgan Kinne and Milena and Abby Jewel; Edith Kline; Rudy and Barbara Knakal
Coffee Hour Hosts:	February 7: Audrey Horne February 14: Lenten Breakfast

### **This Week's Lectionary**

Exodus 34:29-35

Psalm 99

2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2

Luke 9:28-36, 37-43a

NOTE: Audio recordings of some sermons are now available on St. James' website, [www.stjameshydepark.org](http://www.stjameshydepark.org) Look under "Worship"

Sermon Preached on  
Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany  
(January 31, 2016)

### **"Walking Through The Crowd"**

Today's gospel is a story of rejection and response. Jesus was rejected by his home town. But it's the why and his response to it that interest us today.

Now, you remember that today's gospel is a continuation of last week's passage, right? Where Jesus goes to his hometown synagogue and opens up to the prophet Isaiah and reads that the spirit of the Lord is upon him and has called him to proclaim good news to the poor, release to captives, recovery of sight to the blind and to let the oppressed go free.

Remember how he concludes, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing"?

As the story continues, everyone marvels at his eloquent reading. They speak well of him and are amazed at the gracious words that come from his mouth.

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But then things go south. As they're all speaking well of him Jesus keeps talking. "Doubtless you have heard the phrase, Physician heal yourself, and you will say, do the things here that we heard you did in Capernaum."

To clarify, so far in Luke, we haven't heard about any miracle. Jesus' ministry up to this point is summed up in two verses: "And [after being tempted] Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all." That's it.

So, what have they heard that Jesus did? Healing? Maybe.

The point is, the crowd believes they can expect special favors from Jesus because he's the hometown boy. You know, charity begins at home, take care of your own first, and all that.

And THIS is why they reject Jesus. Not because he says something outrageous about the spirit of the Lord being upon him - they're okay with that - but because he rejects the notion that they deserve special treatment. Worse, he compares them to the people in Elijah's day and Elisha's day - people who had turned their backs on God. Who had worshipped God with their lips but not with their actions.

Instead of coming home and saying "Yeah! Israel is number 1!" Jesus says, "Are you any better, any more righteous than the foreigner? Do you deserve anything more than the refugee? Do you have a right to expect more from God than anyone else?"

That's not what any of us wants to hear, especially from our own. It's one thing to get criticism from "outsiders." You can ignore them. It's much more infuriating when it comes from within because that person hasn't bought into the whole "We're the greatest" line. Jesus essentially says, "You aren't the best because there is no best other than God. Until you can accept that, I will do not great work here."

So that's why they rejected him - he challenged their sense of privilege, their exceptionalism. Even though they're the chosen people! And while you might question their extreme reaction of wanting to kill him, you can get their shock, maybe even sense of betrayal, at being put in their place by one of their own.

What's interesting, however, isn't their instant rage, it's how Jesus reacts. He allows them to drive him out of the synagogue and all the way to the edge of a cliff where they want to hurl him off. And then, he just walks through the crowd and goes on his way.

That simple line, that simple action, is so instructive. He doesn't yell, he doesn't condemn, he doesn't tell them that karma is going to come back and bite them. He just walks through the crowd and goes his way. In that little act, he shows God's great power. If they had been asking for a miracle, they got it because only a miracle could get him through a murderous crowd. It may not be the miracle they expected, but it might have been the miracle they needed.

I mean, what did they do after he left? We can only speculate. But it's highly likely that some of them took his words to heart. Eventually. That they prayed, studied more, listened to more reports about him. And changed their hearts.

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If there's a lesson here, it is that, indeed, there is no "number 1," no "greatest" in God's eyes. But the lesson is also that God's power is not only seen in "WOW" miracles like raising the dead. Sometimes the power of God is in walking away, going one's own way.

In our lives, we have many opportunities to point to the truth as Jesus did, even when it means being rejected. Just as often, we have the opportunity to walk through the crowd. That is, when what we say for the sake of the gospel infuriates others, we can show God's power not by retaliating or condemning, but by walking through the crowd, leaving those who are angry to their own prayer. We may never know if our words and actions change others' hearts, but we can trust that, as we walk, God is walking with us. And that is miracle enough. Amen.